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WHEELING, OCTOBER 10, 1899.

The Midnight Hanging.

At midnight was witnessed, within the confines of the West Virginia state prison, the inauguration of the new law for the execution of the death penalty, in the presence of officers of the law, the relatives of the condemned man and newspaper representatives. "Sheep" Caldwell, a colored man who murdered a woman, also of bad character, suffered the fate decreed by the court which tried him for the offense.

The hanging was of more importance, because, with its consummation, the law which prohibits public hangings, with all their revolting details, in West Virginia went into effect. It will be a relief to the people of the state that this is true. The ill-effects of public hangings cannot be estimated. They eat to the morbid curiosity of the rabble, and develop in the people a spirit of savagery, not at all in harmony with the spirit and the practices of civilization.

The United States is one of the few countries of advanced civilization in which public executions of the death penalty have been tolerated. In France that relic of barbarism, the guillotine, is still used in the public square, and, in Paris, the day is given over to the control of the mobs. France has yet to learn its lesson. One can scarcely expect that bloody custom to subside early, however, in a country that can be guilty of a Dreyfus outrage.

Two Comparisons.

The Register mournfully contemplates the Republican party of the present day with its history in past days: "For example," says our neighbor, "compare such men as Seward, Chase, Sumner, the elder Cameron, Morton, Garfield, Blaine, Conkling and the others of those great and broad-minded statesmen, with Tom Platt, Mark Hanna, Quay, our own Elkins, Alger, Teddy Roosevelt and the rest of the talent now directing public affairs, and incidentally the course of the empire."

We are perfectly willing to make that comparison. Likewise, as "one contemplates the Democratic party of the present day, one cannot help reflecting on the differences a few brief years have brought about, both as to leaders and policies." For example, compare such men as Jefferson, Jackson, Calhoun, Randolph, Cass, Cleveland, Bayard, Richard Olney, Randall, Carlisle, Manning, Fairchild, Lamont, Endicott, Vilas, William L. Wilson, Breckinridge, Roger B. Taney and a few other real Democratic "great and broad-minded statesmen," with William Jennings Bryan, Ex-Governor Albigeld, Boss Croker, Boss Tweed, Edward Atkinson (ex-Republican and Aguinaldo's American manager), John R. McLean, Tillman, Latta, Gorman, Aguinaldo and the "remainder of the talent now directing the affairs of the Democratic party, and incidentally the war against the United States government in the Philippines." We agree with the Register that "the comparison is a very striking one."

McLean on Enslavement.

Our Ohio Republican friends will heartily appreciate a few comments on the campaign cry of enslavement, in which it says the hollowest humbug of the year is found in some of John R. McLean's speeches. For instance, the following: "It is the shame of the Republican party to-day that Lincoln's successor would have our soldiers in the Philippines die to make men slaves." Even William Jennings Bryan, the Sun says, who is mouthing Lincoln's name through several states in the cause of surrender, would hardly venture so far as that. The contrast that dishonest orators are trying to draw between Lincoln as a liberator and McLean as an "enslaver" crumbles at a breath.

It is needless to speculate as to "what Lincoln would have done if ambitious leaders among the emancipated slaves in the south had attempted to set up a government of their own upon American territory, and had defied the government and attacked its flag." If it is enslavement to enforce peace and order, then Abraham Lincoln, under these conditions, would have been an enslaver.

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The President at Chicago.

Yesterday, at Chicago, the President of the United States did an unusual thing, in laying the corner-stone of the new federal building, attended by members of his cabinet. It must have been an imposing occasion to the assembled multitude. It will be recalled that some time since, when it was first announced that the President would perform this function, the question was raised that there would be a protest from the labor unions, because President McKinley was not a member of a labor union, and not entitled to serve in such a capacity.

The absurdity of such a proposition created much comment throughout the country, for no such point in all history had ever been before raised. Customarily, the matter of the laying of a cornerstone is conducted by the Masonic fraternity, and the question has never arisen whether the member of the order who performed the function was a laborer or an employer of labor. Here was a building being built by a great Nation. Its Chief Executive was to preside, and yet his